# Follow the Star – The Great Invitation from Bishop Graham

If I’m out late in a rural part of the diocese I’m always struck by the brightness of the night sky.

There are more stars across the cosmos than I can count; their sparkling taking light years to reach us.

And as I drive home, I pass homes with their lights on, and I wonder about life within them.

This Christmas I’m well aware that some of those homes will not be warm places, or will lack food, or might not be safe for all who live there.

But what I want to say to people behind every front door in Norfolk and Waveney is that there is a light on in a church near you this Christmas.

It’s a light that guides you to a place of companionship.

Guides you to place of warmth in the cold.

Guides you to a place of hope even in the face of the fears around war and climate change and the cost of living.

Like the Magi following their star, the lights on in our churches guide you to meet Christ’s love.

Day in, day out, I’m humbled by our churches that are providing practical help in their communities. School uniform exchanges and Foodbanks, debt-relief advice and planting trees, walking with the bereaved and supporting young people, or providing warm hubs for those who can’t afford fuel, or social events for Ukrainian refugees.

And why? Because people down the centuries, even in the bleakest of mid-winters, have travelled with the Magi to take a look into the stable of Bethlehem. There they have seen in a baby, God coming to be together with us, and lighting up the world.

This may seem a bleak mid-winter for many. But the Christmas carol asks us, “what can I bring him?”

Well, we can bring ourselves - so that, with others, we can be together this Christmas. Togetherness – being with others - is an incredible gift. It makes lives sparkle.

So, I invite you. Follow the star to church this Christmas – you are invited.

**The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich**